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Middle-Time Prime





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J. C. Petry

Idle-Time Rime

By

Herbert Flansburgh

ILLUSTRATED BY
W. BEARSE CROCKER

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By
Herbert Flansburgh

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Many of Mr. Flansburgh's selections in this volume originally appeared in the following publications:

Success	Broadway Magazine
Boston Transcript	Toledo Times
Christian Herald	Cleveland Plain Dealer
Columbia (S. C.) State	San Francisco Examiner
Chicago Record Herald	

To Douglas H Cooke
With Sincere Good
wishes
Herbert Plumbrough

Mar 28/18





Soliloquy of a Hawg

AH'S a creepy kin' o' feelin', seem to kotch
me in de night,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

Hyeah mah teeth begin to chattah, w'en de
fros' begin to bite,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

Den de moon say, "Whut de mattah? Why
you skeer'd of all de soun'?"

Dat jes' only winds a-rasslin' wif de leaves
erpon de groun';

Shet dem eyes an' git to snorin', case dey
hain't no ghos' eroun',"

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

I's aware de day's fu' rootin' an' de night time's made fu'
sleep,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

But dey's heaps o' tho'ts I's thinkin' w'en de shaddahs 'gin
to creep,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

I's feelin' moughty 'spicious of de t'ings I hyeah an' see,
Case de fahmah git too frien'ly an' de cohn git mos' too free,
So I reckon sompin's comin' whut it won't be good fu' me,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

I's noticed how de missis pat mah haid an' rub mah back,
Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

Den de chillun fotch me foddah, all dey li'l arms kin pack,
Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

Dat ol' gobble tuhkey see me an' he say, "You's lookin'
prime!

Evah t'ink erbout de feastin' of de folks Thanksgivin' time?
You ain't got no wings fu' flyin' an' you's mos' too fat to
climb,"

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

Goodness lan's! de sun's a-risin' an' I hasn't
slep' a wink,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!
Got a feelin' dat I's 'proachin' moughty neah
destruction's brink,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!
I kin hyeah de squeaky grindstone an' de
raspin' of de knife,
Hit's de saddes' kin' o' music dat I's hyeahd
in all mah life,
Spec' de time is gittin' nigher fu' to end dis
earfly strife,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!

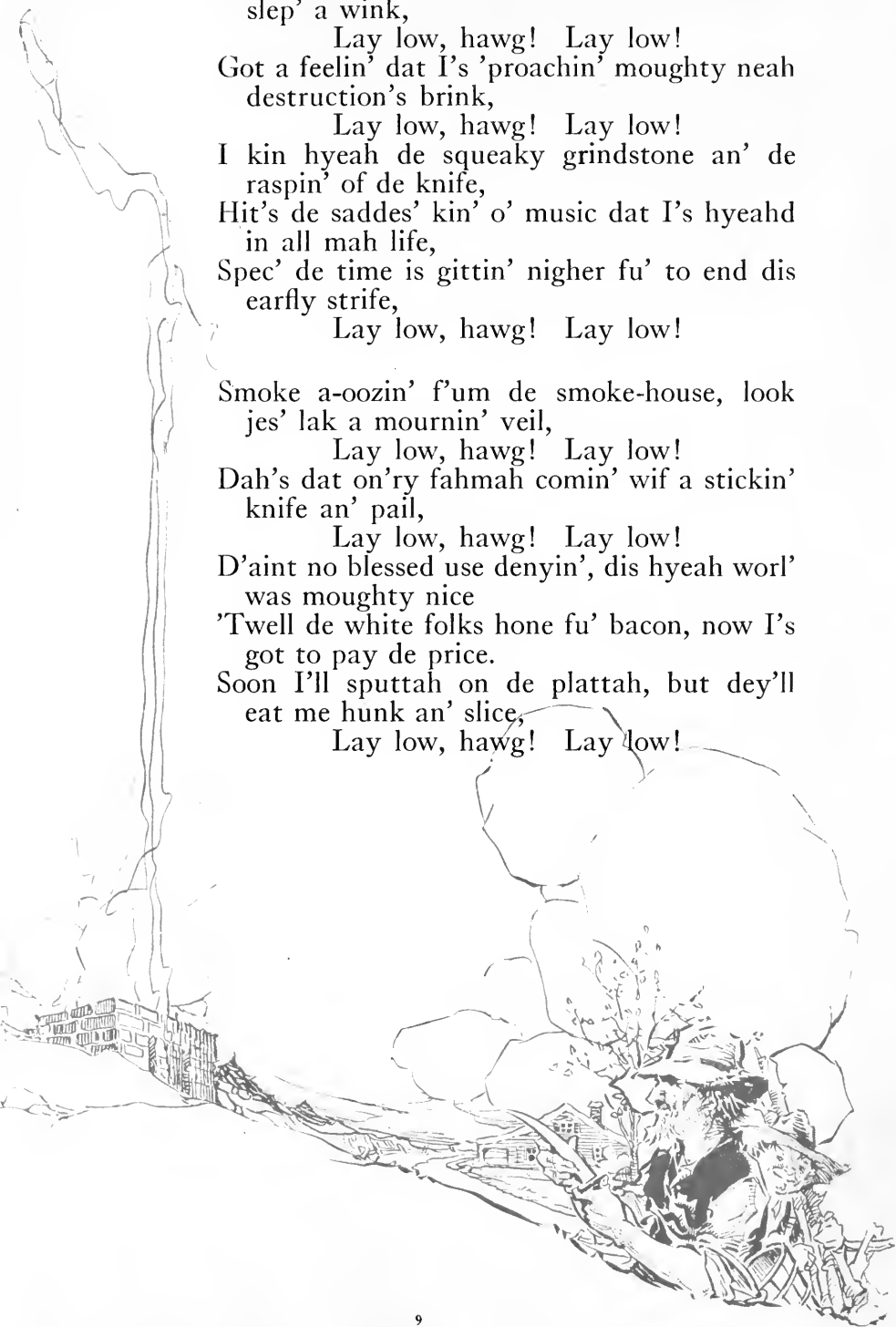
Smoke a-oozin' f'um de smoke-house, look
jes' lak a mournin' veil,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!
Dah's dat on'ry fahmah comin' wif a stickin'
knife an' pail,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!
D'aint no blessed use denyin', dis hyeah worl'
was moughty nice
'Twell de white folks hone fu' bacon, now I's
got to pay de price.

Soon I'll sputtah on de plattah, but dey'll
eat me hunk an' slice,

Lay low, hawg! Lay low!





Li'l Drum

HUT'S de mattah wid yo' noise
Li'l Drum?

Hit's as silent as de toys
Li'l Drum!

Top an' bottom busted in
Dust an' rust am on de tin,
Whaih de tunin' straps hab been,
Li'l Drum!

Dat ol' hole look mighty bad,
Li'l Drum!

Droopin' lak a mouf dat's sad,
Li'l Drum!

Dem two li'l holes in you
Whaih de sticks go pokin' froo,
Lak de baby's eyes o' blue
Li'l Drum.

'Membah how ol' mammy scol'
Li'l Drum;

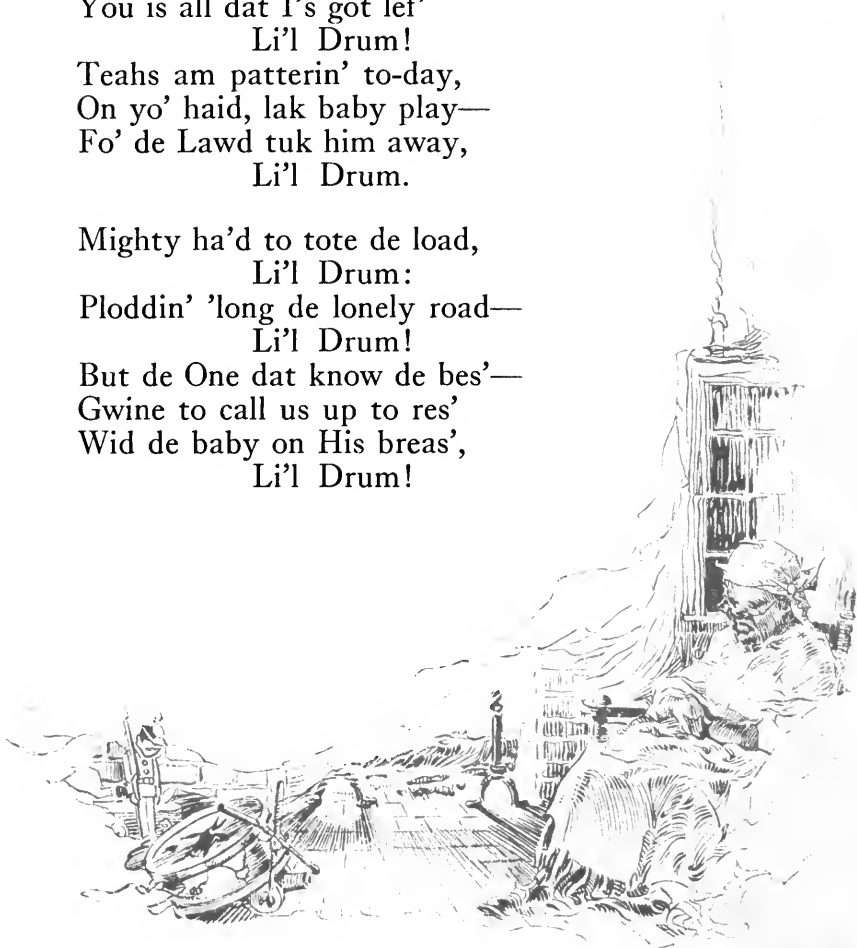
When de racket git too bol'
Li'l Drum?


Dat was music low an' sweet,
'Side de noise ob silent feet
Dat hab halted wid yo' beat
Li'l Drum!

Am yo' heart so sad an' so'
 Li'l Drum;
Dat you cain't tune up no mo'
 Li'l Drum?
Seems I hyeah you gib a sigh—
Lak de baby did, an' cry,
When he kiss an' say—"Goo'-by
 Li'l Drum!"

I's a-feelin' sad myse'f—
 Li'l Drum:
You is all dat I's got lef'
 Li'l Drum!
Teahs am patterin' to-day,
On yo' haid, lak baby play—
Fo' de Lawd tuk him away,
 Li'l Drum.

Mighty ha'd to tote de load,
 Li'l Drum:
Ploddin' 'long de lonely road—
 Li'l Drum!
But de One dat know de bes'—
Gwine to call us up to res'
Wid de baby on His breas',
 Li'l Drum!





Come Back Honey, Come Back

I's a-longin' fu' you Lindy e'vy minute ob de day,
Come back, Honey,—come back!

Oh de road am long an' lonely, an' dey's shaddahs
on de way,

Come back, Honey,—come back!

You know I loves you dahlin', an' you know mah
heart am true.

I loves you lak de roses in de gyarden loves de dew,
Dat's de reason why I miss you, dat's de reason I's
so blue.

Come back, Honey,—come back!

De honeysuckle's twinin' all eroun' de cabin do',

Come back, Honey,—come back!

But dey's droopin' sad an' weary, an' dey don'
smell sweet no mo'.

Come back, Honey,—come back!

Dah's de banjo in de co'nah, but he done fergot
de ring,

Case mah fingahs git so trimbly w'en dey try to
plunk de string,

An' I feel a lump a-chokin' at de on'y song I sing.

Come back, Honey,—come back!



I's a-waitin' fu' you Lindy by de cabin do' to-night,

Come back, Honey,—come back!

Don' you see de candle shinin'? Is you walkin'
towards de light?

Come back, Honey,—come back!

Been a-sighin' fu' you Lindy, evah sence you go erway,
You's mah life an' mah 'uligion, you's de reason
dat I pray,

Fu' de brightah time a-comin' w'en I'll nevah hab
to say,

Come back, Honey,—come back!

The Boys in Gray

(Confederate Veterans' Reunion, Columbia, S. C., May, 1903)

De boys in gray is gaddered in Columbia
to-day—

Stan'in' shoulder up to shoulder, lak dey
went into de fray.

Some is big uns, some is little, mos' am crippled
up an' ol',

But dey's lookin' mighty perky an' dey's
feelin' mighty bol'.

Fro' yo' ches' out, Mistah Sojer, hol' yo'
haid up in de air!

Hyeah dem noisy drums a-beatin', see de
vet'uns ev'ywhaih?

Dey is loafin' hyah an' yandah, dey is marchin'
froo de street;

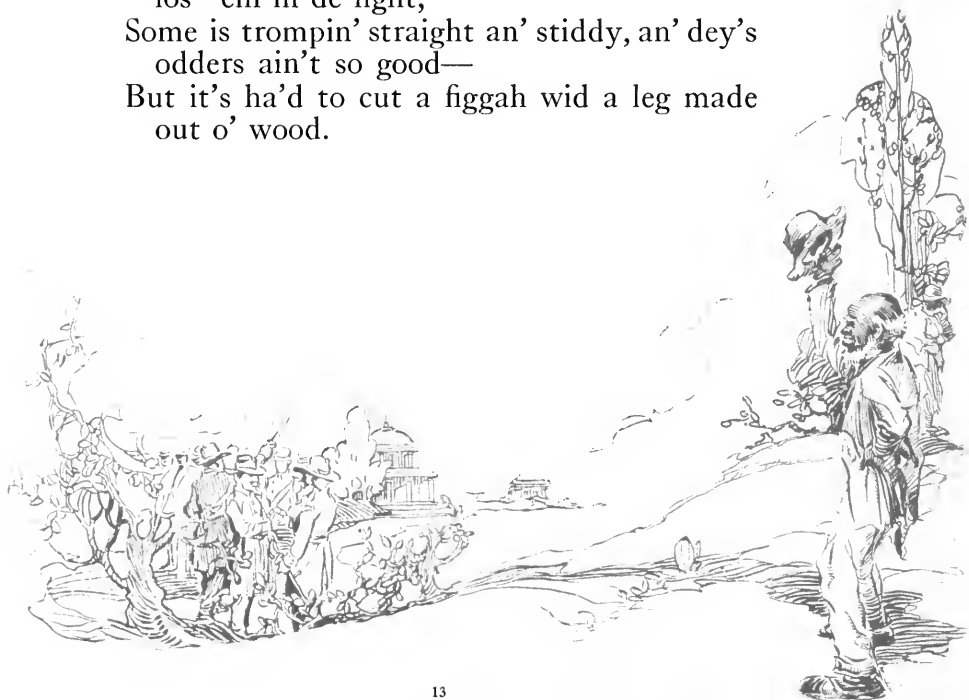
How dat tune of "Down in Dixie" seem to
limbah up dere feet!

Com'ads shakin' by de lef' han' an dey's
shakin' by de right,

An' dey's han's dat ain't a-shakin' 'case dey
los' 'em in de fight,

Some is trompin' straight an' stiddy, an' dey's
odders ain't so good—

But it's ha'd to cut a figgah wid a leg made
out o' wood.



Dey's a mighty heap o' silence roun' de rusty
cannon's mouf'
Decorated wid magnolias an' de roses of de
Souf:
An' de sojers marchin' by it, tuhn erway an'
gib a sigh
As dey see demselves in battle froo de teah-
drap in dere eye.

Dey is some dat fail to answer w'en de sergeant
call de roll,
But dere spirits is a-callin' ev'ry vet'un sojer's
soul.
Soon dey'll all march off to glory, wid de Blue
an' Gray abreast,
Wid de Lawd as dere commander in de fiel'
of Heavenly Rest.





Waitin' at de Do'

Hit's a moughty soothin' feelin' at de closin' ob de day,
W'en I finish out de furrer an' I put de plough erway,
An' I tuhn de tired mule out in de medder lot to res',
An' I walk ercross de stubble to de place I love de
bes'—

I fergit de sweat o' labor, an' I ain't so lame an' so
Case I know mah wife an' chillun is a-waitin' at de
do'!

You kin talk erbout yo' glory, an' yo' rapture, an' yo'
bliss,

Hesh yo' mouf! Dey hain't a patchin' 'side o' Lucy's
lovin' kiss—

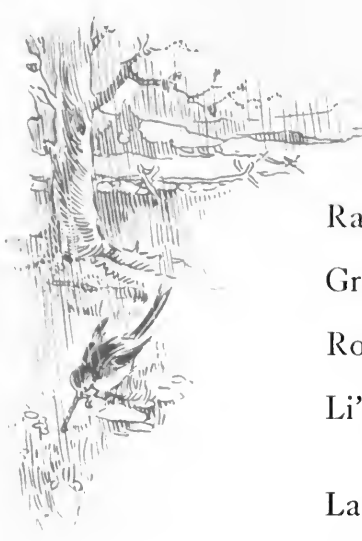
An' yo'd raily t'ink I's honey, jes' a-oozin' f'om de hive
W'en de chillun 'gin a-swarmin' lak dey'd eat me up erlive.
Tell you, man; dey's pleasure livin' dat I nevah know
befo'

I had de wife, an' chillun, waitin' fu' me at de do'.

W'en we gaddah roun' de table, hongry fu' de ev'nin'
meal—

W'ile mah Lucy ax de blessin', in mah heart I sort o' steal
A humble little prayah to Him, a-watchin' up above—
To keep ouh feet a ploddin', in de paf'way ob His love,
'Twell hit seem dat He kin hyeah me, an' He leave de
golden sho'

An' share de meal wid me and dem dat waited at de do'.

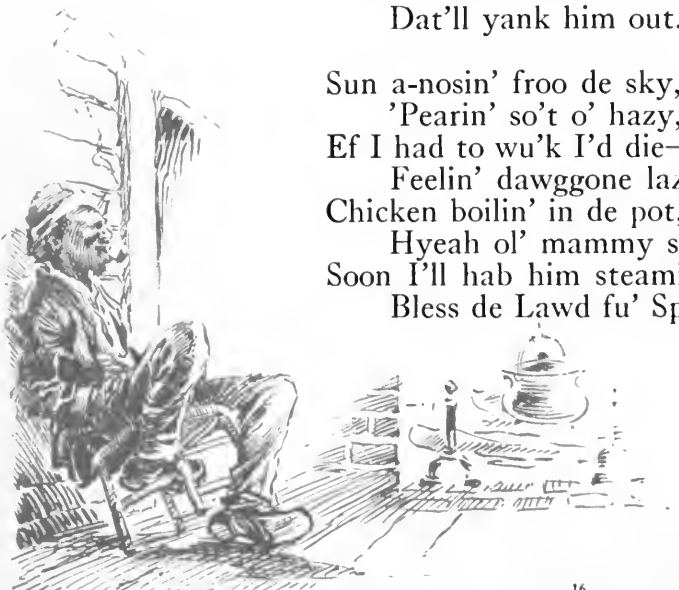


Signs of Spring

Rain a-pourin' f'om de skies,
Grass a-peepin' out,
Groun'hawg rubbin' bofe his eyes,
Seein' whut's erbout.
Robin pullin' on de wohm
Wigglin' in de groun',
Li'l snake done 'gun to squirm
Whah he cain't be foun'.

Lark a-settin' on de limb,
Tunin' up his voice,
Sassy crow a-mockin' him,
Itchin' to rejoice.
Jay a-sighin' fu' a mate,
Lookin' mighty blue;
Hain't no time to hesitate,
Mates am gittin' few.

Hyeah dat ol' hen 'gin to squawk
Lak she's feelin' sick,
One eye lookin' fu' a hawk,
D' odder on huh chick.
Heifer loafin' by de brook,
Talkin' to de trout;
Tellin' him erbout de hook
Dat'll yank him out.



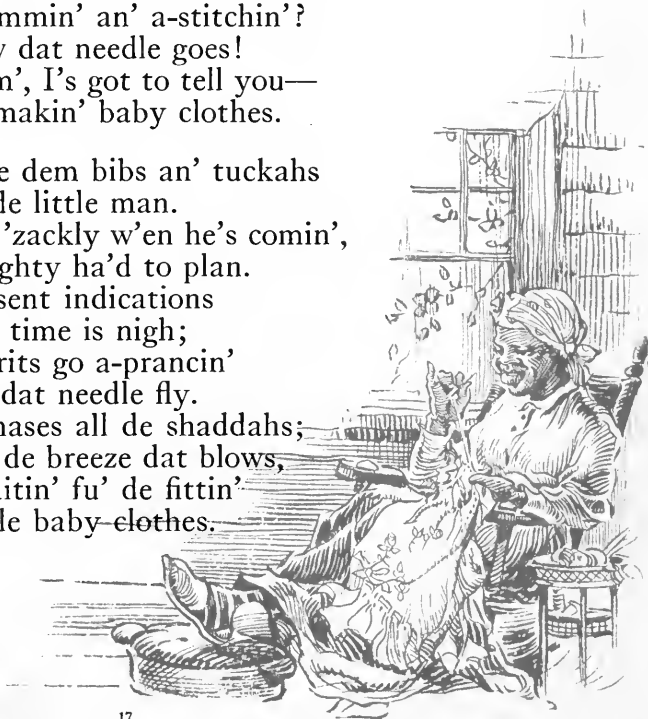
Sun a-nosin' froo de sky,
'Pearin' so't o' hazy,
Ef I had to wu'k I'd die—
Feelin' dawggone lazy.
Chicken boilin' in de pot,
Hyeah ol' mammy sing;
Soon I'll hab him steamin' hot—
Bless de Lawd fu' Spring.

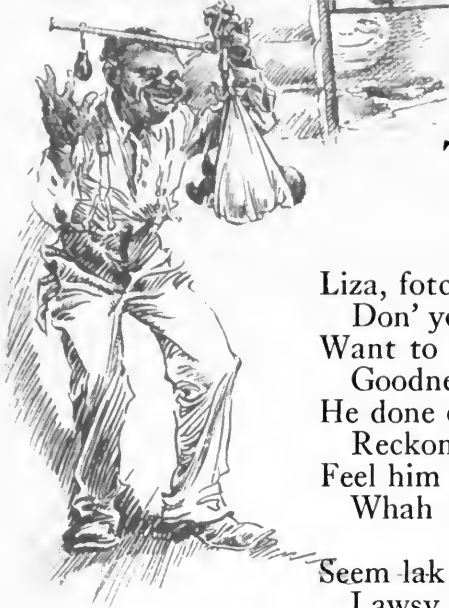
Preparation

Guess you wondah whut's de reason
I's so happy all de time—
How's a pusson gwine to help it
Wid his spirits feelin' prime?
Ef you t'ink mah haid is ailin',
Case I's laughin' all de day,
Don' you pay no 'tention to me,
Hesh yo' mouf an' go yo' way.
Well now, seein' you's so cu'ious
Fu' to know whut's ticklin' me,
Jes you peek into de cabin dah
An' tell me what you see.

Dah now, don' you ax no questions,
Dah's de do' flung open wide;
Cain't you see de great commotion,
Dat's a-gwine on inside?
See ol' Mammy dah a-sewin'?
Whut's de mattah wid yo' eyes?
Cain't you reckon whut she's makin'
F'om de nature an' de size?
See huh hemmin' an' a-stitchin'?
Lawsy, how dat needle goes!
Bless de lam', I's got to tell you—
Mammy's makin' baby clothes.

Got to have dem bibs an' tuckahs
Ready fu' de little man.
Don' know 'zackly w'en he's comin',
So it's moughty ha'd to plan.
But de present indications
Indicate de time is nigh;
So mah spirits go a-prancin'
W'en I see dat needle fly.
Sunshine chases all de shaddahs;
Praise is in de breeze dat blows,
Case I's waitin' fu' de fittin'
Of dem little baby clothes.





The Arrival

Liza, fotch dem skil'uds, hyeah me!
Don' you know, chile, whah dey's at?
Want to weigh dis bran' new baby;
Goodness lan's, but ain't he fat!
He done come eroun' dis mo'nin',
Reckon fu' to stay a while;
Feel him growin' e'vy minute!
Whah dem skil'uds? Hurry, chile!

Seem lak ef he weigh a hunderd!
Lawsy, Liza; but you's slow!
'Less'n you don't come dis minute,
'Speck I'll drap him on de flo'!
Hyah dey is! Now, quit dat squhmin',
Li'l manny! Stop, I say!
Ain't you cu'ious, you rascal,
Fu' to know how much you weigh?

Lay still now an' lemme tie dis
Hyah ol' knot up in you' dress;
Liza, poke dat hook right froo it,
Keerful, now! don't skun his ches'!
Hol' him stiddy! Help me lif' him!
Goodness, how dem skil'uds boun'!
Now I's got you, li'l manny!
Bless de Lawd! Jes' fo'teen poun'!

Dah now, ain't you glad I weigh you?
Whut's de use to kick an' cry!
See you' sister Liza laffin'.
We gwine whup huh by-an'-by!
Put you' arms eroun' you' Pappy,
Lemme kiss dat teah erway!
Case I kiss you, dat's de meanin',
Dat I welcomes you to-day!



Spring Glory

Ev'ry season got dere pleasure,
Some has mo' an' some has less—
Hit depen' erpon de pusson,
Which de one he lak de bes'.
Some folks t'ink de Wintah fines'
Some lak whut de Summah bring;
Ef dey ax me my opinion
I jes' hollah—"Gimme Spring!"

Spring's de season I's a-praisin'
Know dey's wuk to do fu' sho';
But my han's ain't got no itchin'
Fu' de handle ob de hoe.
I got biz'ness in de meddah,
Lis'nin' to dem vi'lets say—
"Step right up an' tell me howdy!
Dis is my erception day".

Evaht'ing seem moughty frien'ly,
W'en de Springtime come erlong,
Dawgwood blossoms nod dey 'bejunce
Robin ansah wid a song.
Catfish swimmin' in de bayou
Wag his tail to Mistah Frog.
Frog, he grinnin' at de tuhtle
Out dah sunnin' on de log.



Fahmah in de lot a-ploughin'
Whoa his mule an' look eroun'
At de crow an' tuhky buzzard,
Feastin' on de wohm dey foun'—
Bluejay come erlong an' ax 'em
How's dey far'in'. Den dey say,
"Dis wohm moughty sweet an' tendah—
Won't you hab some, Mistah Jay?"

Apple blossoms sof' as feddahs
Drappin' down to kiss de grass,
Seems I hyeah de rain-draps giggle
Ez dey go a-scootin' pas'.
Laws a-massy! Ain't it splen'id?
Evaht'ing we hyeah an' see,
Full o' glory of de Springtime
Shakin' hands wid you an' me.





Bacon on de Side

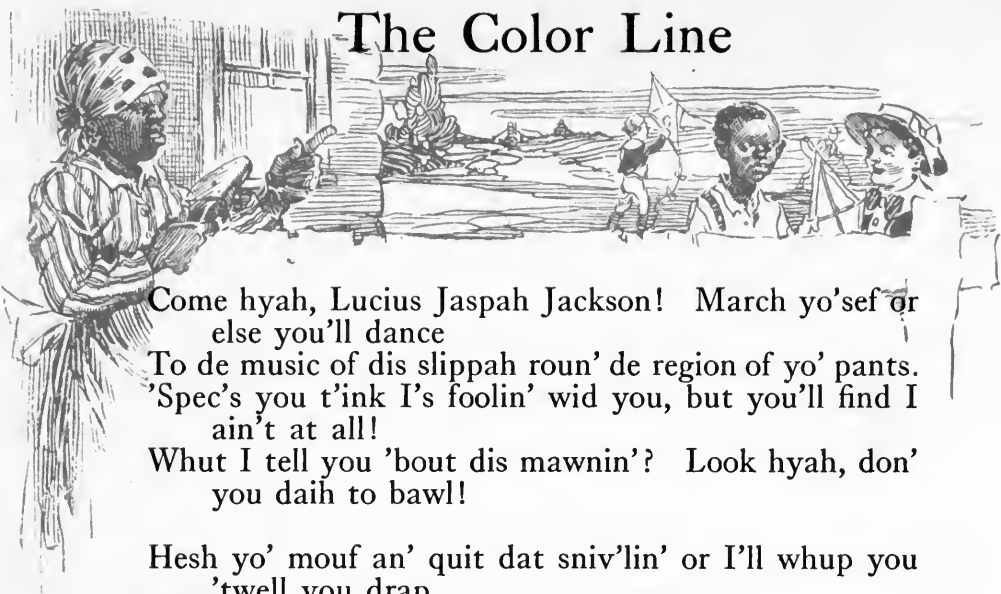
Ev'ybody sings de praises of de things dey lak to eat—
 Some folks say dat ham's de fines', some folks lak de chicken
 meat,
 An' dey's some dat sw'ah dey's nuffin' lak a po'k chop good
 an' brown,
 W'en dey's heaps o' creamy gravy, fu' to slide de po'k chop
 down;
 But of all de sweetes' eatin' dat a mortal evah tried,
 Pass me jes' a dish o' spinach wif some bacon on de' side.

Tek a mess o' tendah spinach, flavored wif de sun an' soil;
 Poke it in de pot an' hang it in de fiahplace to boil.
 W'en de spinach 'gins to simmah so's to tell you whah it's at,
 Lif' de lid an' slide in bacon, luscious lean, wif streaks o' fat.
 Cose dey's goodness in de spinach, but whut tickle up de pride
 Is dat good ol' hunk o' bacon, drippin' sweetness on de side.

Dey ain't no way o' tellin' whut dey eats in glory lan',
 But I reckon w'en de time is nigh fu' me to tek mah stan'
 At de Golden Gate up yandah whah de good folks f'om-below
 Lay down all dey earfly buhdens—ev'y
 blessed sin an' woe—
 It will seem mo' lak I's welcome, w'en de Gate
 am open wide,
 Ef ol' Peter'll pass de spinach wif some bacon
 on de side!



The Color Line



Come hyah, Lucius Jaspah Jackson! March yo'sef or
else you'll dance

To de music of dis slippah roun' de region of yo' pants.
'Spec's you t'ink I's foolin' wid you, but you'll find I
ain't at all!

Whut I tell you 'bout dis mawnin'? Look hyah, don'
you daih to bawl!

Hesh yo' mouf an' quit dat sniv'lin' or I'll whup you
'twell you drap.

Ef dis slippah fail de biz'ness, I'll git dat ol' razzah strap.
Whut de mattah wif yo' mem'ry? I declaih you drives
me wil'—

Whut you mean by goin' out dar hangin' roun' dem
white folks' chile?

I done hyeah dat white boy tell you, he gwine bus' yo'
mouf fu' sho',

I was waitin' fu' de bustin' standin' right dah in de do'.
Guess you t'ink mah ears don' listen! Reckon dese
two eyes don' see?

Oh, I know dat conversation, keerful chile! don' fool
wid me!

Now I ain't a-gwine to whup you, but I tell you dis
fu' sho',

Don' you nevah let me kotch you wid dem white folks'
chile no mo'.

White folks t'ink dere chillun fines', an' I know dey's
moughty fine,

But dere color's de objection, so I draws de color line.

Fireside Tales

W'en I hyeah de win's a-sighin' ez de moon comes roun' de hill,
An' de shadders dance de quad'ille on de groun'—
W'en de owls hoot out dey "Who dah?" so's to skeer de
 whippo'will,
Hit's a monst'ous loud an' lonely kin' o' soun';
But de log's a-buhnin' cheery an' de ol' pipe's drawin' free,
De owls kin hoot, an' win's kin moan an' wail—
I'se mighty rich an' happy wid de baby on mah knee
A-coaxin' fu' to hyeah a fiahside tale.

I don' puhten' to notice how he snuggles to me tight
An' rolls his eyes an' kin' o' hol's his bream;
Den I say, "Mah little honey, I cain't tell no tale to-night,
Case dem hoot owls got me skeered almos' to deaf."
But he knows I's only foolin', so he cuhls up lak a ball,
W'ile I tell him ev'y blessed kin' o' tale;
'Tain' no use fu' me to choose 'em, case he's boun' to hyeah
 'em all,
F'om Ridin' Hood to Jonah an' de Whale.

'Bout de time de whale git Jonah, den de Sandman come erlong,
An' he say, "Now I's got *you*, ol' sleepy haid!"
Den mah Liza fix de pallet, an' she croons huh sweetes' song
W'ile she tucks de little manny in his baid.
W'en I see him sleepin' peaceful, den I wish wid all mah heart
Dat his bark of life will nevah meet de gales;
But mos' of all I'se wishin' dat we nevah gwine to part—
An' say good-by to all de fiahside tales.





The Parting

Feelin' pow'ful blue!
Shaky thoo an' thoo!
'Specs I's gwine to have a tetch o' fevah.
Pulse am runnin' high!
Teahdrap in mah eye,
Case I had to say "goo'by" an' leave huh.

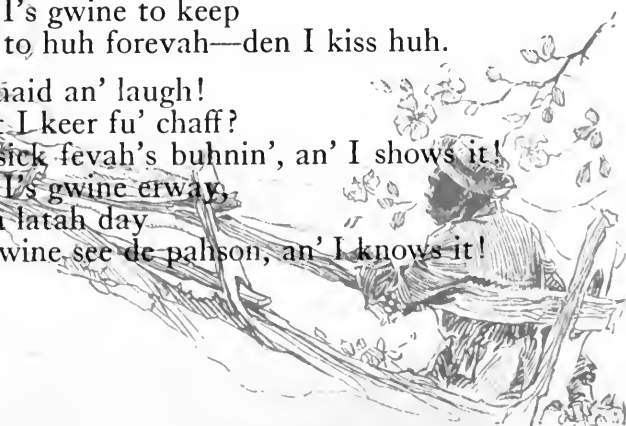
Hel' mah dahlin's han',
Feelin' moughty gran',
W'en she whispah in mah ear—she love me.
Couldn't say a word,
Silent as de bird,—
Sleepin' in de little nes' erbove me.

Tasted ob huh lips,
Lak de dew dat drips
Down to kiss de sweet magnolia blossom,
Pressin' close to mine,
Spahklin' as de wine,
Sweetah dan a roasted shoat, or possum!

Heart begun to jump,
Felt a chokin' lump
W'en I tell huh, "Now we mus' be pahtin'!"
Seem lak if a daht
Run huh thoo' de heart
An' I seen de pearly teahs a-startin'.

Tuhn huh haid eroun',
Lookin' at de groun'
W'en I tell huh how I's gwine to miss huh.
Tol' huh not to weep,
Case I's gwine to keep
True to huh forevah—den I kiss huh.

Go ahaid an' laugh!
Whut I keer fu' chaff?
Lovesick fevah's buhnin', an' I shows it!
Now I's gwine erway,
But a latah day
We gwine see de pahson, an' I knows it!



Snoozin' by de Fiah

Ol' Mose, nevah frisk eroun'
'Nuff to mek him tiah,
Jes' plumb sartain to be foun'
Snoozin' by de fiah.

W'en de snow was ev'ywhaih,
Col' win' blowin' nighah,
He was in de settin'-chaih
Snoozin' by de fiah.

Nevah hyeah him mek a peep,
'Cept to say "Mariah,
Fotch de wood so I kin keep
Snoozin' by de fiah."

W'en he dies you 'spose he'll go
To de heavenly choir?
Bet fo' bits he'll be below—
Snoozin' by de fiah.





Politics

Dah's a aggravatin' problem dat's a
pesterin' mah min',
An' de way to solve de problem is de
way I'd lak to fin',
Case erlection time's a-comin' an' dem
politicians say
Hit depen' erpon mah votin' how dey
gwine to save de day.

Hit's de beat'nes kin' o' doin's how dem
pahty leadahs acts
W'en dey shake mah han' an' tell me
all de figgers an' de fac's,
An' dey sho' git me a-guessin' w'en dey
treat me so perlite,
Lak I's gwine to be de hero in de greates'
kin' o' fight.

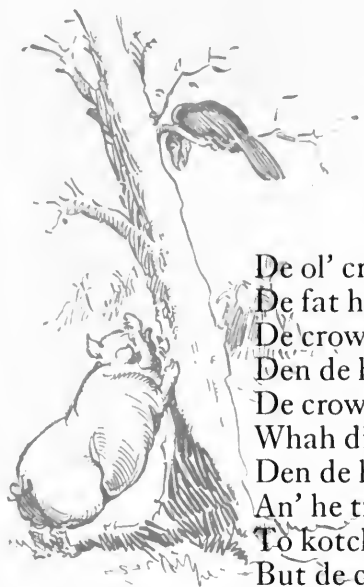
Fus' de Democratahs kotch me an' dey
say: "Now, Uncle Dan—
Cose you gwine to vote ouh ticket fu'
de welfaih ob de lan',"
An' dey go ahaid an' argy dey'll be ruin
sho's you bawn
If dey fails to git de office w'en it comes
to 'lection mawn.

Dey jes' go on wid dere talkin' an' dey
 say de case look glum
 Ef de 'Publicans is 'lected ruination's
 boun' to come,
 An' dey's sump'in sad and glumpy in de
 looks erpon dere face
 W'en dey tell erbout de ha'd times gwine
 to hit de cullud race.

Den de 'Publicans dey nab me an' say
 dey's in de right,
 An' dey ax me fu' to buckle on mah
 armah fu' de fight;
 Ef de Democratahs wins it dey'll be
 sorrer ev'ywhaih,
 An' de cullud folks 'll waller in de miah
 of despaih.

Now I rassled wid de bofe sides ob de
 question, 'twell it seem
 Evaht'ing is gwine to curdle an' nobody'll
 git de cream;
 Sence de ruin sho' is comin' I'll tek
 chances wid de res',
 But I t'ink I'll do de votin' fu' de side
 whut pay de bes'.





A Fable

De ol' crow set in de hick'ry tree,
De fat hawg root beneaf,
De crow he caw an' he laugh "haw, haw!"
Den de hawg, he show his teef.
De crow say, "Hawg, you's pow'ful fat,
Whah did you git dem big sides at?"
Den de hawg git mad ez a hawg kin be,
An' he try fu' to climb up de hick'ry tree
To kotch dat crow an' eat him down,
But de crow he laugh at de ol' hawg's frown —
He tip-toe out on de littles' limb,
An' dis is de sass he talk to him:

"Yo' jowls hang down lak a double chin,
An' hide yo' mouf whah de cohn goes in;
Yo' shouldahs look lak dey gwine to make
De fines' meat fu' to roas' er bake,
An' it 'peahs to me f'om yo' bulgin' hide
Dey's some tendah po'k chops tucked inside.
Kin you see dis limb hyah, whah I set?
Dis hick'ry wood gwine to smoke you yet.
Oh! you needn't grunt an' you needn't sigh
Case de butchah'll git you by an' by;
He'll whet his knife, an' he'll stick you hard,
He'll try yo' fat fu' to git de lard;
He'll rip you up an' he'll scrope you down,
He'll smoke yo' sides 'twell dey done tuhn brown.
My! My! dat'll be one likely treat
W'en I git a taste of yo' sweetes' meat."

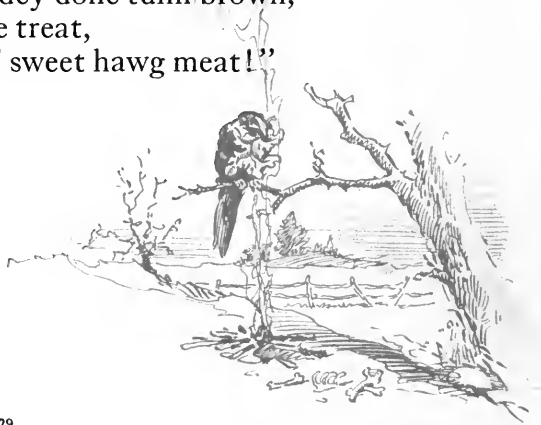
Mistah Hawg look skeer'd an' he 'gin to wail,
 He trimble f'om his snout to his limpy tail;
 But de crow he laugh, lak a crow dat's glad,
 An' de hawg he weep lak a hawg dat's sad.
 He try fu' to run but he was so fat
 Dat he tumble down whah he started at.
 Mistah Crow call de butchah an' he drewed
 his knife,
 An' dat was de end of de fat hawg's life.



He swung dat hawg f'om de hick'ry tree,
 An' he built a fiah whah de crow cu'd see;
 Den de smoke riz up lak de smoke will do,
 An' it smoke de fat meat froo an' froo.
 W'en he git mos' done den de butchah say,
 "Ain't you hongry, Crow? Jes pass dis way—
 Ef it's sweetes' meat dat you mos' desiah,
 Hyah's ham an' bacon, an' dah's de fiah—
 Dey ain't no money you got to pay,
 So cook yo' dinnah an' eat erway."

De crow tuck a oak leaf 'neaf his chin,
 An' de way he et was a mortal sin;
 He gulp dat hawg meat cleah an' clean,
 Didn't leave a pickin' fat er lean;
 Dat crow done gorge hisse'f to deaf,
 An' dis whut he say wif his dyin' breaf:

"He'll rip you up an' he'll scrope you down,
 He'll smoke yo' sides 'twell dey done tuhn brown,
 At las' I's had one toof'some treat,
 An' I's gwine to glory full o' sweet hawg meat!"





The Pacifier

Shuffle on yo' way, Ike Jackson! Needn't
hang 'roun' hyah no mo',
I ain't honin' fu' yo' courtin', so jes'
vacate fru' dat do';
Once I love you true as sayin', now mah
heart am tuhn'd to stone,
Don't keer nuffin' 'bout you nohow, fade
away an' lemme 'lone.

You done cut a moughty capah at de
bahbahs' ball las' night,
Gallavantin' wif dat pusson whut de folks
call Lindy White;
Seen huh roll huh eyes up tendah, seen
you hug huh lak a bah,
An' you scorn'd me lak a lizard, w'en
you seen me settin' dah.

Lindy sho give you de mitten, so de folks say, flung you down!
Now you t'ink de ol' love's sweetes', so you's projickin' eroun';
But it ain't no use, Ike Jackson, case I'll nevah change mah plan,
I's pertic'lah who I marries, an' you ain't mah kin' o' man.

Shake han's, Ike, an' let's be pahtin'! Hol' on! Whut dat 'hind
yo' back?
You ain't tryin' to tease me, is you? Orter give you one smaht
whack.
Got a pacifyin' present? Sho it is! Now lemme see!
Goodness lan's, dat's chicken, honey; an' you fotch it hyah
fu' me?

Look hyah, Ike, you's moughty sassy. T'ink I don't git 'nuff to
eat?
Lawsy, but mah mouf perspiah, lookin' at dat sweetes' meat!
Hyah's de skillet, dah's de pullet, hyah's de gal whut love you
bes';
Bless de lam'! Let's do de eatin', den we'll talk erbout de res'!

Sweetening

If you want this old world to be sweeter,
When hustling for honors and pelf,
You'd better get busy, my brother,
And sprinkle some sugar yourself!



Chums

Come on Old Pipe! The time is ripe
For me to have a smoke,
To sit and rest, and muse and jest
And call all care a joke.
What though the rain bedim the pane,
And winds howl in affright!
Contentment sips wine from your lips,
And drips on me to-night.

Your smoke unfurls in graceful curls,
And robes me with a calm
That warms the heart and soothes the
smart
Of life, with fragrant balm.
My fireplace here bestows a cheer,
My armchair lends an ease,
But you impart the subtle art
That blends us all in peace.

I blow your smoke in rings that yoke
In retrospection's chain,
Until it winds and gently binds
Old joys to me again.
And in the grace of smoky lace
Her face appears—you know,
Old Pipe, 'twas she, gave you to me—
That's why I love you so!



Loss

Farewell! said I to my conscience—
Farewell to you now for aye,
You've goaded me long with my sinning,
And now I shall cast you away.
Time was when you held me in bondage—
Time was when you ruled deep within,
But now I shall need you no longer—
I am free to go forth and sin.

Come back! Come back! O, my conscience!
I cried from my soul's deep grief—
So weary I've grown of my sinning!
I long for your brave relief.
Oh, bring back the strength of your guidance!
Why, Oh, why! make me wait?
Then the ghost of my conscience answered
"You have called me too late—too late!"

Curly Head

(To M. A. H.)

I can see your eyelids falling, put your little toys away,
Curly Head!
You have romped and gathered posies since the waking of the day,
Curly Head!
Let your little feet that pattered till the sandman came along,
Tip-toe off to baby dreamland, keeping time with mother's song.
I will guard your priceless treasures, and your china doll shall keep
A watchful eye upon you, while you rest in peaceful sleep,
Curly Head!

I will place the flowers you gathered, dear, upon your pillow there
Curly Head!
This budding rose shall be entwined in locks of golden hair,
Curly Head!
Sleep well and dream, my little one, for when the night has flown
The morn will find you like the rose, to fullest blossom blown.
My lullabys will ebb away as womanhood appears,
For older songs and older cares, and older sadder tears,
Curly Head!

Hold your little baby tighter, as you rock her to and fro,
Curly Head!
Sing her all the songs of babyland you heard so long ago!
Curly Head!
You are holding heaven near you, let your notes be sweet and light,
As the echo of the whippoorwill shed on the ears of night.
From babyhood to motherhood, and soon your day will close,
And earthly joys will wither like the petals of the rose,
Curly Head!

The night is drawing nearer, lay your heavy burden down,
Curly Head!
Fulfilled has been your mission, you have earned the fairest crown,
Curly Head!
You were sent to bud and blossom all in but a fleeting day,
The star of love your beacon—God is calling you away;
Take these roses for your pillow, kiss them, dear, and let their
spell
Of mystic perfume waft you up to Him, and so—farewell,
Curly Head!

The Bauble

At Morn

I paused beside a cradle and beheld a baby there
Folded in the calm of slumber, holier it seemed than
 prayer—
The sleeping eyes through misty dreams gazed into realms
 of rest—
And waking, saw no world beyond the loving mother's
 breast.
Sweet mother-breast hid from its sight the crags of earthly
 strife,
A bauble rested in its hand—the bauble we call—Life.

At Night

I gazed within a grave and saw an old man fast asleep—
The years had stroked his brow and left the furrows long
 and deep.
The lips though dumb were eloquent, and told me of the
 rest
For him who smiles and labors though his heart be
 weariest.
The gray hair weaved a fairer crown than ever king has
 worn—
The calloused hand was empty—the bauble, Life—was
 gone.



Be Thankful

When yer head an' heart are weary, an' you
beller long an' loud,
An' you feel a fittin' subject to be measured
fer a shroud,
Set an' figger up yer blessin's 'stid o' always
findin' fault
An' a-lookin' as dejected as a sick cow lickin'
salt.

Ain't no use to whine an' snivel, ain't no use
a-gittin' glum,
'Cause you've got to do yer doin's, takin' all
things as they come.
This ol' world is full o' cowhides that'll kick
you fer a goal
When yer settin' an' a-frettin' out the stuffin'
of yer soul.

Ain't it better to be livin' right side up, to
face the knocks
Than be carted to the boneyard in a silver-
handled box?
Be thankful that yer poor enough to know
the simple things,
The grippin' hand of honest friends, the com-
fort that it brings.

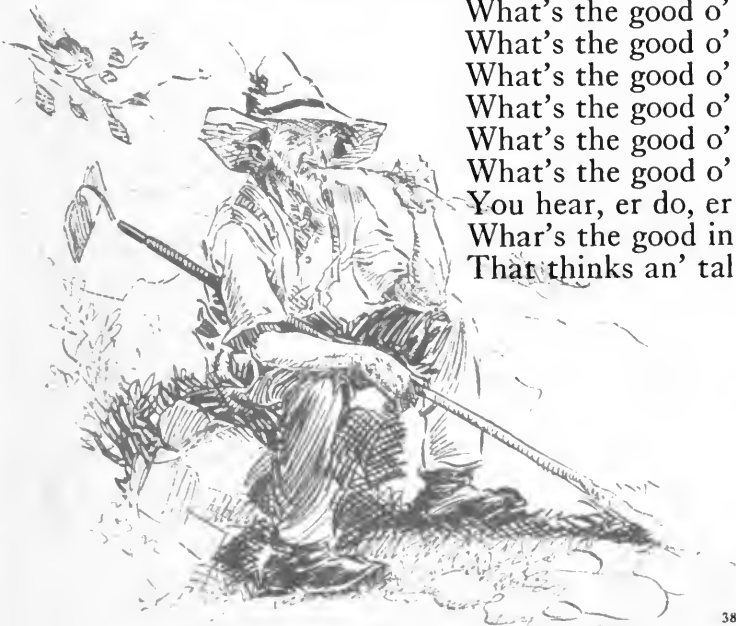
Be thankful fer the humble shack that shields
from cold an' rain,
Be thankful fer the soil to till, the strength
to garner grain;
Be thankful you have credit when you haven't
got the cash,
To buy the prunes an' boneless beans, the
tripe an' succotash.

Be thankful fer an appetite that never balks
ner fails,
When tacklin' pork an' cabbage, er a mess o'
shingle nails.
Drop on yer knees an' thank yer God in
reverential plan,
Be thankful to be thankful you kin live an'
die—a man.



Pessimism

What's the good o' anything
In this world o' ours?
What's the good o' Summertime?
What's the good o' flowers?
What's the good o' Wintertime?
What's the good o' Spring?
Is there anything to gain
Hearin' robins sing?
What's the good o' whistlin' tunes?
What's the good o' jokes?
Don't you hate to git around
Whar there's singin' folks?
What's the good o' shakin' hands
Ev'ry time you meet?
Ain't there lots o' bitter things?
What's the good o' sweet?
What's the good o' happiness?
Kin you tell me? Say—
Don't you think it's wastin' time
Watchin' children play?
What's the good o' workin' hard?
Put it to the test!
What's the good o' gittin' tired?
What's the good o' rest?
What's the good o' havin' brains?
What's the good o' health?
What's the good o' bein' poor?
What's the good o' wealth?
What's the good o' anything
You hear, er do, er see?
Whar's the good in any man
That thinks an' talks like me!



Action

I kin fergive a kickin' hoss
Or one that will not stand;
I kin fergive one that will toss
Me off into the sand.
I kin fergive a runaway
That slams me 'gainst the wall;
But durn a four-legged popinjay
That will not move at all!

There's lots o' fellers, 'long the pike,
The fast 'uns an' the slow,
But wust of all is that ol' tyke
That stops an' will not go.
Don't do no good to cuss the gink
That loafes from morn till night;
The only thing to make him wink
Is bran' new dynermite.



Loafin'

I contend 'at any man
'At won't quit workin' when he can
An' loaf eroun' from labor free
Ain't fit fer my sassiety.
Why a man 'll work an' fret
Hisse'f into a drippin' sweat,
Is more than I can understan'
When loafin's plenty in the lan'.

When you die nobody'll care
Ef you never turned a hair
To git yourse'f a honored name
Wrote down in the books o' fame.
An' all the work you plan an' do
Will be forgot as quick as you.
So I'll be durned ef I can see
What's the good o' industry.

Don't want no boss to gee an' haw
Me, like some fellers yell, an' saw
Their cattle, till they lunge an' choke
Theirse'fs a-gittin' in the yoke.
Gimme room to loaf, an' 'nuff
Terbacker fer to chaw an' puff
An' keep yer work from nosin' me
An' me an' it 'll jes' agree.

Loafin' is my work an' I
Will do it well until I die,
An' when I reach the other shore
I hope to turn an' loaf some more.
My airthly goods ain't much an' sich
As I'd be counted 'ith the rich
My heart is lazy, but it's light,
My assets is—my appetite.

Call me anything you will,
I'm jes' a hayseed coated pill
A-rollin' this terrestrul ball,
An' ef you'll set an' cipher all
The loafers up, you've know'd er seen
An' I ain't jes' the reel champeen
I'll kick myse'f to kingdom come
An' go to work—I will, by gum!





Cheer Up!

Smile, ol' feller, smile, goldingya!
Quit yer grouchin' fer a while,
Lemme see yer face bisected
With a happy, broad-gauge smile!
Lay off whinin' an' repinin'—
Things look blue to-day, I know,
But the sun'll shine to-morrer
Ef yer want to have it so.

When yer ailin' yer a-failin',
Smile awhile an' shout an' dance,
'Stid o' nursin' tribulation
Happify each circumstance.
Pucker up yer lips an' whistle,
Loosen up yer happy chortle
An' you'll hear the echo ringin'
From some poor, down-hearted mortal.

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